

What a way to go —but is it the end?

WHAT a way to go! Wycombe Wanderers Reserves planted eight goals for posterity past Ilford's shattered defence at Loakes Park on Saturday.

But for many, their last memory of the second team will be all the more soured by such a devastating win. Doubtless it adds a little more ammunition to the arsenal already stored by pro-Reserve team preservationists.

Doubtless also it has many lesser, but nonetheless senior, clubs in the vicinity licking their lips in anticipation of new signings — like Marlow have already made with heartening success in Steve Freeman.

The question remains however, whether Wanderers can afford the luxury — yes, sheer luxury — of an "elite" squad.

Can they afford — or more to the point avoid — the pitfalls involved?

For, taking just one instance, a string of injuries — remember the 1968-69 casualty queue — would soon cut back the problem of selection, possibly as far and further than a bare skeleton eleven. It's happened before as St. Albans and Hillingdon Borough would readily testify.

And, while players could admittedly be drafted in in such an emergency, this system has never made for either harmony or consistency on the field, and is ultimately unsatisfactory.

Then again, with little or no room to manoeuvre with any untiried talent, the reservoir of potential for future years must now look elsewhere for grooming. That is unless Wycombe's

scene today

AN OCCASIONAL COMMENT BY THE SPORTS EDITOR

committee can seek out a junior club willing to act as a "nursery" and baby-sit awhile.

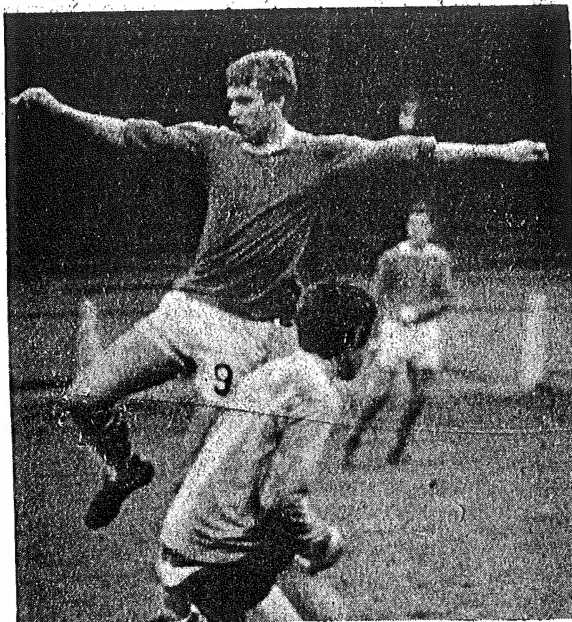
Even more relevant, while entry into the Premier Midweek Floodlight League — the possibility of which was first revealed in last week's 'Free Press' — would offer some attractive new fixtures, it would still not account for all those blank Saturdays destined for Loakes Park.

The answer surely lies at Oxford, where City sought and succeeded in streamlining costs without the axe. They gave their reserves the added glamour of more localised football while still maintaining the standard of opposition in Hellenic League competition.

It is an outlet put forward by among others, my predecessor, and one that I heartily endorse.

The seeds of discontent at Loakes Park have been sown throughout this affair. Now one can only wonder whether its effects might not be more far-reaching, or indeed, if this is really the last we shall see of Wycombe Wanderers' Reserves? R.I.P. (for the moment).

● MIKE WHITESMAN



Something to remember us by — Wycombe Wanderers' reserves went mad in their last game, slamming Ilford at Loakes Park on Saturday.